Politics of Human Liberation

REVOLUTION RE-ASSESSED

LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST ORGANISATION

A libertarian poster reads, 'Every person is born with the capacity for dignified work and a human existence.'

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains the four main statements outlining the political position of the Libertarian Socialist Organization. In publishing these statements we are trying to give effect to the traditional anarchist assertion that a revolutionary movement should outline, as fully as possible, its vision of a future society and that the means it chooses to struggle for the creation of this society should be consistent with those ends. Therefore, a free, equal and humane society cannot be achieved by a movement employing, for example, manipulative and terroristic methods nor by organizing itself in a hierarchical way in which important decisions are made by only a few.

We live in a world which is dominated by two rival imperialisms — the Soviet Union and the United States — each of which is experiencing serious functional problems such as unemployment, inflation, planning breakdowns and ecological destruction which stem directly from the social structure of each. Therefore, food shortages, bureaucratic bungling, industrial mismanagement, strikes, sabotage and resistance movements from within its empire characterize the state capitalist structure of the Soviet Union while unemployment, inflation, fuel shortages, third world anti-imperialist movements and so on bedevil the private enterprise capitalist economy of the United States. Unfortunately, before they leave the stage of history, these two powers have the capacity to destroy the world many times over in a last desperate attempt by either ruling elite to maintain its imperial power.

As with the decline of many great powers, new calls go out continually for a reassertion of the old certainties but, more and more, those old certainties are being challenged from within. Throughout the world, movements are developing which challenge the roots of oppression. The authoritarians of the right call for a reassertion of faith in the laissez-faire ideal, in private property and entrepreneurship, in charismatic leadership and consumption while the authoritarians of the left call for the masses to line up behind them, to place their faith in them and to abdicate the right to individual freedom in the interests of

building a "workers' state". But the future belongs to neither of them. Community co-operatives, rank and file groups, decentralized ecology and anti-militarist movements, movements for women's and gay liberation and revolutionary religious groups are all part of an embryonic movement which is challenging the centralized, hierarchical, competitive and oppressive ethos which is common to both forms of capitalism in the world today and which contains the promise of a new democracy. This new democracy (which we call direct democracy) emphasizes decentralized power structures based on equal decision-making by all in which co-ordination and centralization will be effected through the election of mandated, revocable delegates. It will also emphasize socialization processes which value the development of individual autonomy and responsibility, which replace the narrowness of nationalism with a view of international human liberation and which encourage the non-violent resolution of conflict.

We believe that the political tradition which best reflects these aims is provided by that of anarchism or libertarian socialism. This does not mean that we agree with everything that anarchists have stood for (e.g. the advocacy of terrorism by a small proportion of anarchists over the last 100 years). However, we believe that in the ideas of such great 19th century anarchists as Bakunin and Kropotkin and in the forms of social organization created in such revolutions as Kronstadt 1921, Spain 1936-37 and Hungary 1956 can be found the most profound insights for those wishing to establish this new democracy. The realization of such a goal may be more than the culmination of a great dream. It may be the only hope for a humanity which has the means of destroying itself, and which has ruling elites who see the use of such weapons as a policy option that they have, rather than the monstrous crime it would be.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOT REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1970's a now-defunct libertarian organization known as the Self-Management Group formulated a statement which it called "Workers' Councils Democracy Not Parliamentary Democracy". The reason for compiling this quite explicit statement about how that group believed a socialist democracy should organise itself was a new one for the left in Australia at that time. SMG members felt that libertarian socialists should have an explicit view of the ends they were seeking so that they could more effectively make the means they used align with the ends they sought. The practice of marxist-leninist organizations in using deceitful, manipulative, coercive and often brutal methods to achieve supposedly socialist, democratic and humanist ends and their failure to achieve anything except deeply authoritarian, tyrannical societies (U.S.S.R., China, Cuba, etc.) reinforced the SMG's desire to "spell out" what it was fighting for.

With the break-up of the SMG in 1977 and the subsequent formation of the Libertarian Socialist Organization (LSO) it was felt that the old "Workers' Council Democracy" statement was still valuable but should be updated to take account of developments in our thinking on a post-revolutionary society.

Our aim as an organization is to encourage people to build a self-managed society. By this we mean a society which presupposes the abolition of the state, the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, the distribution of society's wealth on the basis of equality, the displacement of the consumer society by social relationships firmly grounded in a richer cultural and community life and the re-organization of work according to criteria of health, interest, co-operation and social need. It also involves the replacement of social hierarchies by decision-making which has its institutional basis in general assemblies of men and women at fundamental levels — the workplace and the community. As revolutionaries we can conceive of only one goal for a social revolution — the remaking of society so that human beings will be an end in themselves and human life a revered, and even a marvelous experience.

This statement is not a complete blueprint for a self-managed society. It simply attempts to outline how we, at this point in time, see the broad, structural framework of such a society and, as such, will no doubt be modified in the future by us, by others in the libertarian movement, by others in struggle, and ultimately, by those who create the post-revolutionary society for which we are fighting. Being a political programme

dealing with the structure of democracy it does not deal in detail with such questions as the overcoming of sexism and racism, with the rejuvenation of cultural and community life, and with the environmental issues the new society will have to confront and solve. We do not, however, wish to give the impression that any of these matters are secondary or that libertarians are only worried about organizational matters and are not concerned with social issues. Nor do we wish to convey the idea that they can only be worked on "after the revolution". Such considerations are, and will continue to be, part of the lifeblood of the libertarian movement. We do, however, feel it is essential to discuss now how a post-revolutionary society would be structured in order to avoid the trap of people not having thought through all the issues properly and, perhaps, being mystified by such "revolutionaries" as marxist-leninists who will invariably be proposing hierarchical solutions.

These vanguardists believe that they can implement a socialist society be seizing the state. We, on the other hand, believe that a democratic society can only be created by a mass movement which itself constructs the organizational means to replace the state entirely. Such a movement must be capable of dismissing political vanguards and parties.

THE LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION POLITICAL PROGRAMME

The most important aspect of any society is the way the decision-making process is organised. Humanity is at base social, creative and productive. We enter into social relationships to satisfy our creative and social needs. We enter into certain social relationships to produce goods and services to satisfy our basic physical needs. But the way these social relationships in production are structured can prevent the satisfaction of certain of the creative and social needs. This is because, so far, most people have been prepared to accept a hierarchical structuring of these relationships. This has led to the growth of a small ruling elite which makes all of the most important decisions about what to produce and how to produce it. Their main criterion in making these decisions is the maintenance of their power. The elite is able to persuade people that it should have the maximum benefit of the workers' productivity.

We live in such a hierarchical society in Australia like people in *every* country in the world. Most of us accept our positions in the factories, offices and educational institutions as order-takers. Most accept that the decisions about what we produce and how we produce it should be left up to the

individual boss or group of bosses that make up the national or international corporations. Work is socially organized and controlled by the ruling class. We believe that it should be controlled not be a ruling class, but by all the people who do the work.

We are told that the most important decisions about the development of society are under our control through parliament. Originally only the rich were allowed representation in parliament. It took a struggle by the people to wrench this privilege from the rich and win a vote for all men. In most countries it took a further struggle to include women. Throughout this period the ruling class resisted. They granted reforms in the hope of providing sure ground for resisting further reforms. But an increasing body of rulers realised that giving the vote to the people would not challenge the structure of society but confirm and strengthen it by winning the consent of the majority to their own oppression. No amount of parliamentary representation would change the reality that the owners and controllers of production (business-people and financiers) determined the whole content and direction of the growth of society and controlled the details of everyone's day to day existence in the fields, factories and workshops.

The social democratic parties and unions willingly worked within this reality and therefore could not challenge it. In fact they strengthened hierarchical society by providing the myth of an alternative through which workers identified with the system.

Increasingly in this century we have seen parliament providing more co-ordination and direction in society. Has this increased the voters' control over their lives? In fact we have seen the growth of large government bureaucracies with the result that even more areas of our lives are regimented and interfered with. We have no control over the activities of such bureaucracies.

Social democrats and liberal reformers see the state as an agency for balancing the various forces in society. They think they only have to achieve government in order to turn the state to good uses. Other leftists more or less see the state as an executive body of the ruling class of capitalists. They believe that it is only necessary to remove this ruling class and replace it with themselves for the state to become good. We believe that any system of hierarchical political government of society creates interests of its own which must conflict with the needs of the people. These interests include the maintenance of power, the desire to control and direct human activity and to restrict the range of possible alternatives. State power necessarily separates its possessors

from the people, even in systems where politicians are elected. Permanent bureaucracies, armed forces, police etc., stabilize the interests of the elite into an interacting network. This structure is available to influence and control by changing governments and by those whom the elite who run the state identify with — other elites. But it is also a power itself. Politicians must accept the imposition of the interests of the permanent state structure in order to govern, just as they must accept the interests of the corporate bosses in order to maintain social order.

For example the secret police state structure continues to grow with or without approving legislation and has always converted any government to its logic, a logic which governments already accept in principle since they wish to defend "their" state. It should be recognised that this is especially horrifying in the case of the military section of the state. As long as we have competing nation states we will have the threat of war, which means nuclear, chemical and biological war. Those who look to the state as the agency of social change forget that the state is the bloodiest perpetrator of violence that humanity has created.

In many societies the state does represent some gains of social reform movements. But these are vulnerable to changes of government and to the social situation — especially the continuing strength or otherwise of movements of reform. Moreover, the people who run the state structures consider that they are dispensing benefits "possessed" by them and that they have the right to decide how to apply "their" protection and benefits. (This *is* the legal reality.) This is hardly a stable basis for social justice.

Furthermore, the application of social responsibility for individuals through welfare within a bureaucratic context is usually invasive, oppressive, discriminatory, unequal and hedged with dependency creating controls and demands. It also leads to the establishment of large organizations of people devoted to checking, administrating and divisively handing out benefits. Much of this work is inherently boring to the people doing it. Many of the "professions" in welfare are founded on self-serving myths and in their operation destroy the initiative and autonomy of users.

Welfare increases the range of people's choices compared to a laissez-faire state and protects some from the depredations of capitalism. However it is itself a massive structure for avoiding questioning of this system and the raising of the issue of equal distribution of wealth. The welfare state is not imposed on capitalism by statist socialists as anti-state right wingers believe.

It grew to protect capitalism from its own destructive viciousness.

Government, though itself powerful enough to restrict the activity of corporations and constantly involved in the management of the economy, works within the parameters of a society founded on corporate power.

In fact the direct and indirect involvement of the corporate world in government is large. But as well, and this is often the crucial factor, the economic, political and media elites are united by certain fundamental ideas. These begin with the assumption of the necessity of their monopolization of activity in each of their spheres. Parliamentary politics and media content do not stray from this assumption, nor the assumption that there is only one way of conceiving of a social order. Of course, these elites are often in conflict with each other and within themselves. But it is a mistake to confuse these conflicts with a real challenge to the system.

We see, then, that it is an illusion to believe that this society is truly democratic, that parliament provides control by the people. In fact the distinguishing feature of our society is bureaucratization. Throughout society in culture, politics, work, and leisure, the majority of people are apathetic and uninvolved while their lives are managed from outside by hierarchies beyond their control. This apathy is a counterpart to the way society is organized, not an accidental by-product. Representatives, specialists and bureaucrats justify their control over our lives in terms of efficiency and rationality. But they must exclude groups with inconvenient ideas and interests from a role in decision-making to achieve this narrow "efficiency" and "rationality". Most people have retreated to predominantly privatized lives, on the whole accepting the management of society by "experts". Politicians are largely seen as just another variety of managers and in this the undemocratic nature of representative "democracy" is tacitly recognised. The same situation applies in the unions.

However, society would not function without a degree of participation. In industry it has been seen as necessary to attempt reform in order to win workers' support and not resistance. For this end social democratic (e.g. A.L.P.) and liberal capitalistic regimes throughout the world are encouraging reform in the social relations of production. They are encouraging bosses and workers to institute reforms providing they do not take up the crucial question — whether there should be a ruling class at all.

These reforms include various schemes for worker repre-

sentation on boards of directors, workers' participation, worker control etc. However, in the present economic climate with large unemployment bosses are content with traditional measures of fear and coercion to encourage productivity. Nonetheless it is likely that industrial democracy will again be used to encourage workers to produce by giving them a feeling of control at work and identification with the organization's goals. Perhaps when this happens and people see that it does not provide real control over work while it implies such a possibility then they will seek the real thing. What is certain is that trade unions, social democrats, liberal capitalists and the various marxist-leninists are not advocating non-hierarchical social relations inside or outside production.

WORKERS' AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

On many occasions during the past two centuries where the people of one society or another have issued a revolutionary challenge to the power of their rulers, there have emerged autonomous, grassroots organizations which played dynamic roles during the course of those revolutions. These organizations, when based on the workplace, have often been called workers' councils and when based on the community have been given such names as communes and neighbourhood committees. (The names are unimportant. Their functions are paramount.)

Many of the people involved in these projects have seen them as the only effective bases on which to form a socialist democracy. We, too, share this conviction. We believe that it is necessary not only to fight the power of those who have traditionally controlled us but also to encourage people to abolish all adherence to the principle of hierarchy and to end all loyalty to hierarchical organizations. The history of modern revolutions, we believe, shows that only the workers' and community councils created by people at the base of society can reflect the values of equality and democracy as opposed to the hierarchical structures so much favoured by many "revolutionaries".

In recent history some workers have tried to fight this system of hierarchy based on the bosses' rule at the point of production. To do this they have built autonomous workers' councils in order to make decisions about what to produce and how to produce it. As well they have had to defend this system of decision-making against the murderous fury of the ruling elite, because such a system would mean the elite's complete redundancy. The workers' council or grouping of all workers in different enterprises has been the most co-operative instrument

for the expression of the skills, intellectual and physical, of the workers. The most important examples have been in Russia 1917-21, Spain 1936-37, parts of the resistance in WW2, Hungary 1956 and France 1968.

The assembly of all people at the relevant workers' or community council is the basis of a real democracy. To co-ordinate local, regional or international production and distribution or other political problems they simply select delegates with specific instructions from the assembly. These are not the equivalent of the professional politicians selected in a parliamentary democracy. Delegates will receive the same wages as everyone else. They will return to the job after problems are solved and decisions are taken. Delegates' positions will not be allowed to constantly fall into the same hands but will be circulated. If they do not follow the instructions of the assembly the delegates are simply recalled by an assembly meeting of the workers who sent them there. In a parliamentary democracy there is no possibility of recalling a professional parliamentary politician. There is no political organization to perform that function. In a libertarian society delegates cannot abuse their positions as long as people do not want them to.

The general assemblies not the delegates, will be the policy-making bodies. The job of delegates will be merely to execute such policies, administer routine tasks and communicate the policy of the general assembly to other general assemblies or their delegates. In our society parliament makes policy *without* our participation but *with* our consent (the vote). The corporations make policy *without* our participation and *without* our consent. The government bureaucracies (the public service, the judicature) make policy *without* our participation and *without* our consent. The trade unions, and student unions etc. make policy *without* our participation but with varying degrees of consent from none to some. In a self-managed democracy policy in all areas of work, education and community life would be made by the appropriate general assembly or general assemblies. National policy and the discussion and choice of alternative plans would be made by all general assemblies. After a vote (secret ballot if necessary) was taken by the assembly the decisions would be recorded and taken by the delegates to a federal assembly, a gathering of delegates from the federation of all councils. When policy direction is voted on it will not be the delegates' votes that are counted but the collective accumulation of the votes cast in the individual councils' general assemblies. The majority decision will become

policy on every question. The minority has of course the effective power in the councils it controls or doesn't control to agitate for a change in direction. Wrong decisions taken by the majority will no doubt strengthen their case for a victory in the next federal assembly. However, the secession of minorities to form their own organs and mutual aid links, if they feel continually constrained by majority decisions, will be an accepted right in the extreme situation that would prompt such extreme action.

At this stage it is not clear how the functions of the workers' and community councils are divided. Future experience of such councils and their preliminary forms will stimulate resolution of this question, though we find that there are theoretical and historical grounds for forming opinion on this matter. Obviously, workers' councils should be the bodies which make decisions about life in the various enterprises. Similarly, community councils will be necessary to organise matters within neighbourhoods. However, the question of which type of organization should have primacy in formulating policy at the regional, national and international levels, or what combination should exist is a more difficult one to solve. Those who argue for the primacy of workers' councils point out that the workplace is the main focus of our interdependence where groups of people have to be involved in public life. They also point out the potential narrowness of the concept of community, and the pressure for conformity in such a social unit. Those who believe that community councils should have primacy argue that a stress on work-based councils is a hangover from marxism which we should abandon. They say that a wider decision-making role for the community councils would overcome the problem of the enterprise-based councils having too partial and sectional a perspective on policy decisions. Either as a legacy from the previous urban structure or through conscious choice, large numbers of workers may not live in the immediately vicinity of their workplace. If so, their workers' council may not a sensible means of making decisions about their community when that community has to discuss such issues as investment, health facilities, and so on. As well, some people, if only for short periods, may be totally committed to domestic work and, therefore, have easier and more appropriate access to community councils. Whatever the combination of councils it must be ensured that people have only one vote on any such issue.

Libertarian revolutionary tradition favours the workers' councils in this dialectic but community councils may well be favoured by technology and ecological demands, opening up the

real prospect of universal, creative, integrated work and leisure. The ultimate criterion for deciding this issue will be which form most effectively reinforces the values of direct democracy and enhances people's control over their own lives. The one principle which must guide libertarians' debate and practice on this point, however, is that the basic organ of decision-making is the general assembly at the appropriate council *not* any body of delegates.

The councils will organise the military defense of the people and be the main instrument of social justice, with law based on the satisfaction of human needs and not their restriction by helping to maintain a ruling elite in the manner of present capitalist law.

Workers' councils will need to make links with councils in industries which supply them with raw materials to regularize their relationships. They will also need to make similar links with factories they supply and with distribution centres. Such links will be routine matters requiring little discussion by the assembly but administered by special delegates under the right of recall.

In capitalist society many of us are engaged in work that is essentially unproductive. Much of the paper shuffling in the public service, insurance, etc. would be redundant in a rational society. A vast number of people would be freed for more productive and interesting areas of work. It is essential in such a situation that society should shorten working hours for such purposes as discussion, leisure and education. Another essential feature of both workers' and community councils is that a great deal of care must be taken to ensure that all the information necessary for making wise decisions is on hand for people and in a form and a language they can understand.

It should be clear that we see workers' councils as the democratic bodies for all workplaces — education, health, agriculture not just secondary industry. We see all types of workers taking part in these councils and the day to day co-operation of work on an equal basis. Every factory must have its technicians, every construction site its engineers, every education facility its experts in various spheres. However in a workers' council expertise would not mean power over others but would place a demand on the expert to co-operate and a demand on others to recognise and use expertise when it is relevant. This can be done without surrending initiative, critical faculties or the right of the people effected to decide. The nuclear energy issue has shown, once again, that major social decisions cannot be left

in the hands of experts and that the effectiveness of expert knowledge is usually restricted to a narrow area within a much broader debate.

The essential nature of the councils will be that they organise political power where it really exists; at the point of production and in the communities. We suggest then that people begin to organise these councils rather than participate in parliamentary elections. While there is relevance in voting for the most reformist or democratic ruling party during the elections, to give political space to build these councils free of immediate fascist and reactionary oppression, we should not accept that these reformist capitalist regimes will tolerate the councils when they threaten them. People should regard elections as tactical situations of limted significance. The most significant activity is not to serve at the polling booths for the ALP but to build cells and councils at our places of work and in our neighbourhoods.

EQUAL DECISION-MAKING

In these workers' councils every person will have one vote subject to the following elastic restrictions; people who are intellectually or psychologically handicapped will have the option of a vote. Children who, from the experience of parents or councils where they are involved, can comprehend and effectively make political decisions will have a vote. The involvement of young people will depend on their involvement in the wider society. We expect that the age of responsible participation will be much younger than it is today. Such responsibility in a situation of increased integration will help young people mature. People who commit anti-humanist activity will not be penalised by taking away the vote from them as happens in some cases in parliamentary democracy. Every effort will be made to include them in co-operative and responsible activity.

Each person will have one vote as outlined irrespective of race, sex or religious orientation. Although this is the avowed intention in a parliamentary democracy as well, women and racial minorities are victimised because they do not have effective power. They have usually less power than other people. They are scapegoated usually because people who have no power find it easier to irrationally suppress less powerful groups than replace the system which oppresses them all.

Horses, cows and land being non-human will not be entitled to a vote as they do as a result of some gerrymandered electoral systems such as the one in Queensland. It will not be acceptable

that people will have the equivalent of two or more votes because they live in more remote parts of the country or have more important economic problems. Human beings are the basis of our society and they will each have one vote.

Writers, artists, small scale craftworkers, musicians, actors and so on will probably organise themselves into community councils.

People will be enfranchised through the councils. If people are not working at the time of the election they will still vote in their council assembly. Sick and old people will maintain this link to provide them with an effective basis for expression of their attitudes. It will be the responsibility of the council to see that everyone enrolled has a chance to vote. Voting will be a voluntary act.

When we use the term *equal* decison-making, we are not so naive as to expect that every decision will be made with exactly the same degree of involvement of all the people affected by a decision. Different people will have different degrees of knowledge, concern and attention in relation to different decisions at different times. Not everyone would or should have the same amount to say or otherwise contribute. But increased self-confidence will see a much more real, more active involvement by all people in the general assembly. Trust, confidence and familiarity allow individuals elasticity. It would be mechanistic to believe that the act of voting is in itself sufficient to guarantee that people are preserving their real participation in democracy. This will always be determined by the reality of the circulation of information and the basic seriousness with which people partake in debate. However, we are quite sure that the fact of each individual's having the equal power to determine the choice of policies is the only secure structural basis for direct democracy.

EQUAL WAGES

The material wealth produced by the collective energies of the people will be divided equally. After finance needs for national policies are decided, an approximate figure will be arrived at which can be divided amongst the producers equally. This will be paid in the form of a money wage. In a world of finite natural resources each person should become the trustee of a certain agreed upon portion of these resources. The most efficient way of providing this to each person is to convert those resources to currency which then allows people choice within this framework.

The alternatives to some form of a market available to a

socialist society are bureaucratic planning or distribution of goods through a free storehouse. The first is what operates with varying degrees of ludicrous inaccuracy and imposition of ruling class priorities in state capitalist societies. The second is the society based on the slogan "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

Planning which attempts to direct production according to estimates of consumption in all areas must be bureaucratic and authoritarian because it is impossible to allow for the variety and development of individual wants. It is structurally necessary to ignore some wants and because they are not allowed for in production, they are thereby restricted. Some state capitalist societies carry out opinion polls to assess wants but this is a concession by the bureaucracy not a structured means of allowing variety to flourish.

The free storehouse idea demands that people can merely take what they want in goods without using any tokens to reflect the importance of their need for particular goods. But, in fact, the only way of ensuring that this is possible is by over-producing goods so that the storehouse will always have available whatever anyone might want. Otherwise, shortages would operate to deny certain needs without making this explicit and, therefore, remediable. Furthermore, people who entered a storehouse would have no way of knowing whether the need of others for a particular good was greater than their own. People have to have a means of mediating their needs by a consideration of the limits of what is possible for society to produce. There can be no society of super-abundance without ignoring environmental and resources constraints and without dismissing the problem of inequality of wealth at an international level.

Society must make choices about what to produce, choices which must restrict some people. (For example, society could (should?) choose not to produce private cars for everybody.) The problem is for society to make these choices in a way which makes a minimum impact on the possible variety of human expression. While freedom to acquire material goods is certainly not the sum total of human freedom, it is an important aspect of the expression of this freedom and can only be facilitated by a money economy. It is our belief that the problem can only be solved by a mixture of large-scale planning and a consumer market. The structure of direct democracy would provide the means for choice amongst alternative national plans with the different restrictions they imply.

We do accept the necessity to totally underwrite, where

possible, many essential services, so that exchange of currency will not be necessary. Medical care, most transport, utilities fall into this category.

Every person who fits within the category of a voter in the preceding section will receive an equal wage. We particularly stress the need for the aged and sick to receive an equal wage, even if they are unable to engage in productive labour. In a capitalist society these people are written off as no longer useful to capitalist production and maintained on a pittance. Children who have voting rights will also receive the wage in order to give them the possibility of independence from their social unit (family, commune, etc.) if they desire it. In the case of infants or intellectually and psychologically handicapped people it will probably be a good policy if the principle of an equal wage applies to them. The money could be spent on behalf of the desires they express.

The strength of such an equal wage system is that competitive activity between workers' councils with the aim of making profits to increase their wages is prevented.

In capitalist society investment in housing or any support of home life and leisure or payment of those chiefly working in this area is considered wasteful. This domestic ecomomy is upheld by the unpaid labour of women. In a self-managed society when one or more members of a living unit needs to spend most of their time in such work they will not be penalised. They will recieive a full wage (as mentioned before they will probably exercise their political power through community councils). If society is to be genuinely libertarian people must practise their politics in their personal lives. Therefore we would expect that such work would be shared equally between men and women.

We do believe that such a system will not only release the psychological and social abilities of all human beings but will as well lead to a great rise in ordinary economic production. Our problem will be to rationally plan our resources in relation to our ecology. We expect more goods to be produced in a shorter time, because of social co-operation. Finally we will have to decide in a world of massive inequality whether we intend even within that framework to take a drop in out standard of living in order to help other people care for their needs. We in the Libertarian Socialist Organisation believe that this would be a moral imperative. We would encourage a drop in the standard of our living in order to provide food, clothing, medical supplies, technical aid, arms and if necessary volunteers to assist in every way the struggle of oppressed peoples for a self-managed revolution in

their own countries. Of course many would argue that such a change would be a qualitative improvement not a "drop" in our standard of living.

HUMAN LIBERATION NOT NATIONALISM

For the last few hundred years the people who boss us about have managed to encourage us to accept ideas which maintain our oppression. The most mystifying idea they have used to maintain their power inside the societies they control has been the idea of nationalism. (Previously religion was the main ideological support to deny the existence of class). Boss and worker we are all supposeddly one nation. Bonds of blood and national boundary are insignificant in comparison with political ties. The most significant public ties between human beings are their views about the type of decision-making process which would operate in society and their attitudes towards various forms of domination. From having such a view on these questions they will develop their code of human conduct, their morality. What is most significant about people who have blood ties is that they are divided against each other on these questions. Therefore the Australians who believe that they should have power over other Australians by managing them at work have very little in common with the Australians they control.

In two horrible wars this century the ruling class have managed to use national identities as a lever to get people to kill each other. These wars have only left the causes of imperialist wars alive because they are caused by competition between the national ruling elites.

When the bosses call for workers to put their shoulders to the wheel for everyone's sake, the nation's sake, it means mainly for their sake, for the bosses' privileged position. The call by the bosses and nationalist minded workers for national unity is merely a call to try to mask the real differences that exist.

We call upon the people to free themselves and even their oppressors. The ruling class is made up of sick and restricted individuals with the perversion of controlling other people. We hope that people will see that the true question involved is not national liberation but human liberation.

IN CONCLUSION

All these ideas are our at the present time. We would be foolish to pretend that they could not change with further thought. Moreover, it will be a mass movement which will put libertarian ideas into practice. Drawing on the widest range of

expertise and practical experience among the population such a movement will create forms and innovations which we have not considered.

We have taken up the question of the essentials of democratic structures. Without these we believe a self-managed democracy cannot operate. However such changes would be illusory if those making them did not alter the quality of their whole life.

People will have to re-organise work not only to fit in with the schedules of direct democracy but also to make their work a satisfying and creative experience. Many people today are foreshadowing a technologically created "utopia" in which machines and computers will do most of the work and the rest of us will be "free" to flick pebble across ponds, weave baskets or blow our minds with the ultimate in computerised audio-visual equipment. We believe this is rhetoric to ease the passage of changes in work which will bring about greater control over the workforce and greater centralization of power. But apart from this we also believe that such "utopias" reflect false notions about technology, freedom, work and leisure.

A hierarchical society creates technology suited to the interests of the dominant social class and suppresses the liberatory potential of technologies within the context of oppressive and unjust structures. We will only achieve freedom by controlling the decision-making structures which determine the creation and use of technology.

People have a need to do productive work. The desire for utopias of leisure is a reaction to oppressive relationships at work and to all the consequences of that — people suiting machines not machines designed to suit people, industrial disease and accidents, production of useless things, production of inferior goods, unequal distribution of information, training etc., unfair distribution of the "dirty work", the monotonous, purposeless, unfulfilling nature of many jobs, unfair distribution of the boring but necessary parts of any given occupation and competitiveness amongst workers. But to deprive people of the possibility of personally satisfying and socially useful work is to deny them a vital part of their potential.

The flight from work is also a result of the ridiculous pace of our society. People are constantly anxious because they have too many different things to do in too short a time. This is particularly ridiculous while there is unemployment. In this climate even leisure is a desperate and hurried affair. It would be a qualitative improvement in our standard of living simply to

have more time and to change the general pace of society. To do this requires a change of values and the power to apply changed priorities. We do not have to automate ourselves out of life and into privatised consumer lethargy.

In a libertarian society we imagine that in many areas (especially energy and food production) work and domestic life and leisure will be more integrated and indistinguishable. This will partly be a result of ecological practices, partly a result of a more complex combination of the skills of individuals in a greater variety of living patterns. We also foresee that individuals will have time to develop a greater range of skills. They may also change occupations a number of times. Certainly education and training will be available throughout life both to facilitate this variety and to provide stimulating recreation. However, we do not imagine that eliminating a public life of work and a social division of skills and occupations will be either desired or necessary.

People would have to ensure that they were making socially valuable products and in such a way that the environment was not being destroyed.

Both industries and energy systems will need to be decentralised in order to bring them more securely under the control of workers and communities. Therefore, in the case of energy systems, it will not be enough to simply use renewable energy sources — sun, wind, tide etc. These systems must also be decentralised so as to diminish the possibility of their being, once again, centrally and hierarchically controlled. This is not to say that energy and industrial systems would be chaotic and unplanned — simply that they would be locally based and controlled.

Finally, people will have to learn how to overcome attitudes of sexism, racism and other prejudicial attitudes which lie at the basis of various forms of domination. A social revolution which achieved the structural changes necessary to implement the kind of democracy described above but which failed to confront such problems would simply be laying the basis for its own degeneration. Structurally, the broader cultural life which would accompany the creation of a self-managed society would see experiments with small group living relationships, nuclear families, extended families, communes etc.

If libertarians are agreed that these are the broad outlines of a society in which they would wish to live, then they must also be clear about their role and about the way they organise. If libertarians are going to join together to pursue their aims, then

they have to evolve strategies and undertake activities which are consistent with their ends and organise in a way which reflects their egalitarian and democratic ethics.

FOR A DIRECT DEMOCRACY BASED ON A FEDERATION OF WORKERS' AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS — FOR EACH PERSON — EQUAL POWER, EQUAL WAGES

THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

MEANS AND ENDS

The need for consistency of means and end is the ultimate condition in considering our role. Our fundamental aim is freedom. Its form is direct democracy. This cannot be given from above or produced by anonymous forces. Personal change, independent thought and creative effort around defined aims, and applying recognised values are the bases for attaining a free society. They will occur only with the practice of direct democracy and autonomy in direct action by the people. Dependence on leadership or reliance on bureaucratic and parliamentary channels expands the erosion of initiative amongst the people. Self-activity is the only school for self-management.

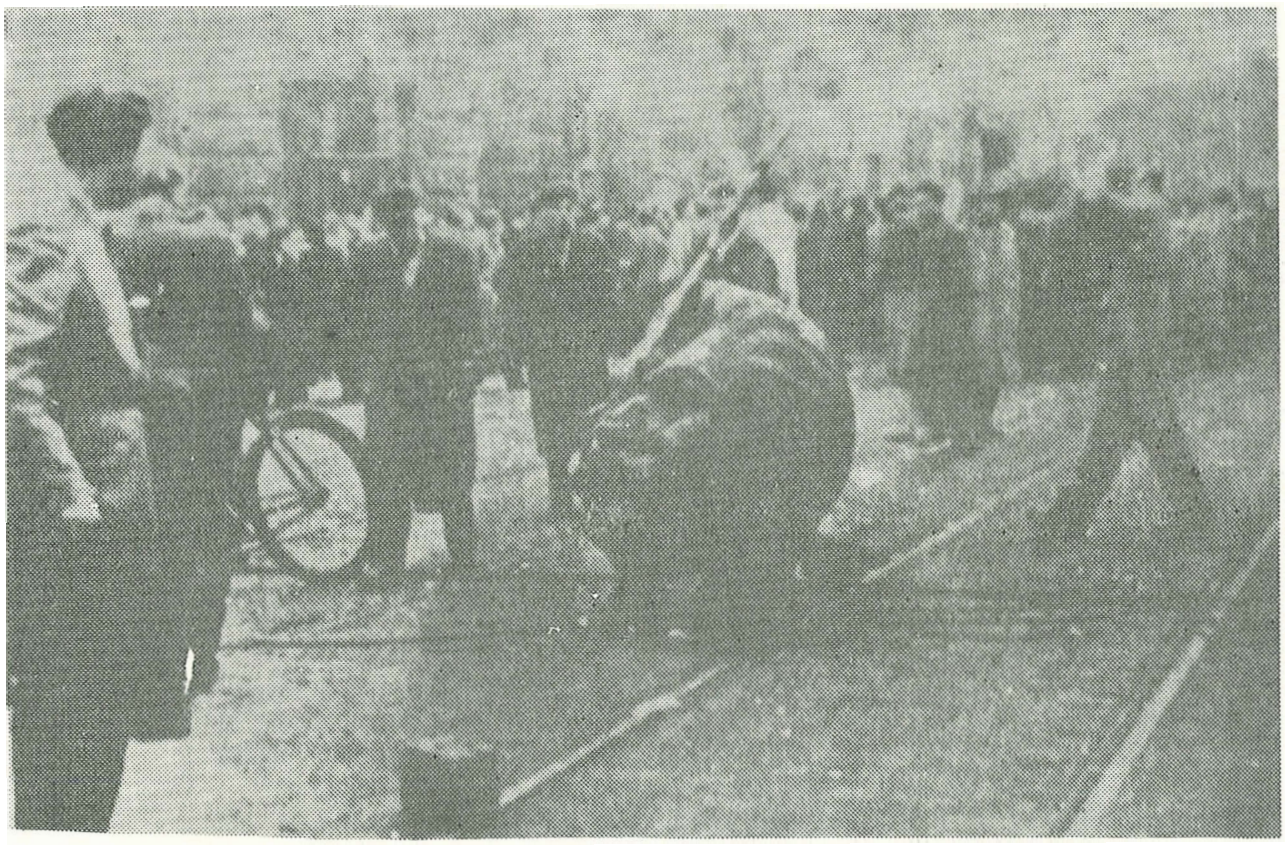
REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS

We are not referring to the narrow, rationalistic conception of humanity usually implied in leftist discussion of "consciousness". It is because we are aware of the need for change that reaches to the individual psychic base of the irrational in politics that we have emphasized the need for means consistent with our ends.

Non-libertarian revolutionaries believe that socialism comes from above or outside people. The classic formulation of this was by Lenin in 1902 in the phrase "the working class can only achieve trade union consciousness". It must therefore be led to socialism by the Party. Lenin was forced to amend this position when the working class created revolutionary soviets in 1905, but he held to his vanguardism. The essence of vanguardism is the belief that the people must be incapable of emancipating themselves through structures and actions of their own devising. Most vanguardists believe in a socialism run by the state, with the promise of eventual utopia. They see this transition as necessary to bring about the development of the "human material" (Lenin's term) which is inadequate for full freedom. The belief in the subsidiary role of the creativity of the people becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because the Party's seizure of the state involves the smashing of the efforts of the people or their submission to central control, the Russian Revolution providing the classic example here.

Nagasaki: after the bomb.
Now, as throughout human history, the state is the most ruthless and bloodiest perpetrator of human destruction.

The Soviet Union 1917 to the present..how not to make a revolution.



The Hungarian revolution of 1956 began a libertarian socialist tradition in Eastern Europe which is the main threat to state capitalism and to Soviet imperialism.

From the first day of the revolution, a truly working class movement had expressed itself in the spontaneous formation of councils all over Hungary

In 1973 workers took over the Lip watch factory in Besancon, France. Meeting in workers' assemblies, they continued production in a practical example of self management in industry.

Revolutionary slogans decorate the collectivized railroads.

Working together, people paint slogans on a train.

Slogan reads, The Land is yours, workers!.

Spanish Revolution 1936-37,

Whether they are open authoritarians or believe they have discovered a benevolent form of vanguardism, leaderships are primarily attached to their own indispensibility, correctness and power. The efforts of the people remain acceptable only if they do not detract from these. They seek to have people support them as representatives of their interests. Thus, the shifts in consciousness they encourage are destructive of the capacity for self-emancipation. They identify the revolutionary movement with their organization, and are therefore manipulators.

Libertarians believe that the people can achieve consciousness adequate for the creation of socialism on the basis of their own collective experience. Various social-psychological and sociological explanations have been offered to explain this. The essence of the argument is that people are not totally destroyed by social conditioning, but must retain (even for the purposes of a hierarchical society) such resources as participation and co-operation and thus capacities for resistance and self-activity. It is quite sufficient for this statement, however, to rely on the historical evidence of the development of ideas and examples of direct democracy, the most profound of which were provided by the people *despite* the leadership of unions and parties, not because of it e.g. the collectives, councils and action committees of the Spanish Revolution 1936-37, the Hungarian insurrection of 1956, and the French events of May, 1968.

SPONTANEITY

We do not believe that this consciousness issues forth automatically, either because of the "purity of the masses" (as in the naive faith about insurrectionary activity of some traditional anarchists) or because of historical forces which make revolution inevitable. Some libertarians, in response to the destructiveness of vanguardism, believe that *any* attempt by revolutionaries to spread their ideas or to engage in activism is vanguardist. They would restrict themselves to reporting on struggles. But even this requires selection and interpretation by the revolutionaries according to their ideas. In fact, all the examples of libertarian revolutions developed understanding and aims which were created by communication of information and ideas. Sometimes groups of revolutionaries had a part in this. These revolutions were liberatory not because people unconsciously reacted but because of what they consciously created.

At the same time we must avoid rigidity in our outlines of the future society. Basic libertarian concepts (e.g. direct democracy, decentralisation and local autonomy) and practices

(direct democracy, recallable delegates, rotation of delegated tasks, federation when and where necessary) must be explicit but not confined in a blueprint of the future society.

AUTONOMY

The standard by which actions should be judged liberatory is not that of lack of conscious preparation. It is that of conscious independence from organizations and ideas representing domination and a willingness to create means of action under the control of the actors. Spontaneous action originating in unexamined, unconscious motivations or misunderstood outside forces is just as likely to be bad as good. Action which is both ideationally and organizationally autonomous must always be beneficial. Of course, action will often have varying degrees of autonomy in either sphere (a self-managed body may advocate repressive ideas). In such a situation anyone with greater clarity will oppose regression or lagging. Spontaneists would deny this role exclusively to revolutionaries. It can be expected that there will be some mutual interaction between autonomy in ideas and organization. Revolutionaries must assist this whenever they can by communicating their understanding.

THE TASKS OF ORGANIZED LIBERTARIAN REVOLUTIONARIES

Our unique importance is that we have an overall critique of society, and an overall solution. All revolutionaries claim this much. But our overall critique extends to all forms of authoritarianism including the solutions of other revolutionaries. We claim, therefore, to see a little further than others but we do not aspire be leaders in consequence of this. Revolutionaries have the responsibility of helping others to become revolutionaries, not that of achieving all the enormous tasks of a revolution. Our task is always to demystify, never to represent. We aim to be the most accurate revolutionaries, not necessarily the best militants. We do not wish to win influence by demonstrating our ability for a superior effectiveness in pushing forward, on behalf of people, their demands.

We are dedicated to the uncompromising advocacy of self-activity of people, to their own self-institutionalization of socialism, to their organizational and ideational autonomy and the antagonism between their own power and the aims of all parties.

One task, therefore, is to disseminate information on historical and current examples of self-activity or to assist in

such dessemination to counter the impression that nothing is done without leaders and competition.

But the organization is created to provide a basis for activism, to help each other resist the tendency to privatization, to exchange and consolidate knowledge and experiences, to provide defence against repression and to concentrate our energies to make an impact for specifically libertarian socialist ideas. We expand these functions be creating regional links and eventually a national federation. We maintain international links and work towards an international federation while remembering that local grass-roots activity is the essence of our activism.

Such an organization can proceed on its own initiative to create platforms and campaigns, enter new areas, make its own issues and maintain an impetus somewhat independent of objective conditions and the arrival of issues.

But the libertarian socialists as individuals, sections and organizations are also involved in various ways in broader movements such as reformist and issue-oriented campaigns, coalitions of groups supporting elements of libertarian aims and practices and, eventually, a broad revolutionary movement. Here they carry out demystification of reformist, nationalistic, vanguardist etc. illusions and advocate direct democracy. In struggles for partial aims they try to make people aware of the overall basis of the problem and the interdependence of attempts at a solution.

THE LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The unity of a single organization of libertarians can be based on nothing other than agreement in ideas. How far this agreement should extend can be a difficult matter but it must at least include the basic socialist and anarchist critiques of exploitation, domination, the state, alienation, etc., agreement on the nature of the alternative society, structure of the organization and its role.

Within the libertarian socialist (or anarchist) tradition there have been some major differences on each of these points. For example, on the question of future society differences between anarcho-communism, anarcho-syndicalism and council communism. It would seem that most of these differences involve emphases different enough to make co-existence in one organization impractical. However, they usually do not exceed the bounds of a healthy and stimulating pluralism which allows organized debate and co-operation in political activity.

Unity in federation must also be based in ideas even if such federations would tend to have looser adherence to particular conceptions. The libertarian socialist movement may have the character of a single loose federation or it may be made up of a few federations (and other groups) each with tighter adherence to particular conceptions. Our experience is that an on-going federation can only come about when there is a reasonable common denominator on the above issues and sufficient viable regional organization.

Agreement on the above issues is realizable but agreement on social theory has limitation past a certain point. It seems that basing an organization on a particular thoroughgoing social theory has the inherent danger that the survival or success of the organization becomes confused with that of the theory. Thus the theory becomes religious (as with marxist organizations). Theoretical agreement should be an ongoing creation of an organization, partly in response to issues which emerge. When the movement can support them, avenues for debate on social theories should be established (journals etc.).

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Revolutionary activity is not the activity of revolutionaries alone. Revolution cannot occur through the proliferation of cells of the revolutionary organization, which become committees, then councils in a linear development. The revolutionary group is not the embryo of future society. The libertarian movement will be part of a multiple challenge to domination.

This challenge has its basis in long-standing features of capitalism but the struggles of the sixties signified a new impetus. Anarchists originally drew on and encouraged elements in the workers' movement which challenged domination as such rather than aspects of capitalist domination. These conflicted with the ultimately predominant elements which favoured a new form of domination in which the state replaced or modified private capitalism. Similar mixtures of elements exist in any new movement. For example, part of the basic ideology of the women's movement is identical with basic libertarian views in its anti-authoritarianism, its demands that political movements embody the values they espouse, its attempts at internal democracy and dissatisfaction with partial solutions. At the same time marxism, reformism and separatism accommodate the movement to domination. The counter culture reveals basic libertarian elements along with a desire to simply be given space by society. The ecology movement's critique of industrialism

often produces libertarian ideals, yet it tends to separate technological problems from their social context.

At any particular time due to historical/sociological factors a particular sector of society may be more militant and critical. Any group which has been excluded or discriminated against and comes to hold hopes for a better future will be more likely to fight (women today for example). This was originally the position of the industrial working class, and like the working class, once any such sector of society secures a place within society its radicalism and militancy become periodical not constant. Even in the stage of radicalism there will be tension between the tendency to push the critique to its fullest dimensions and the tendency to tailor it to the limitations necessary for winning recognition. How this battle proceeds is not predetermined by fate but due to highly subjective struggles of ideas and organizations as well as to powerful objective trends. Trend is not destiny, as can be seen by comparing the results of this battle in the working class movements in Spain and Britain. Another example is the anti-nuclear movement. It is certain that capitalism is marketing alternative technology and generally seeking hierarchical and competitive solutions to the energy problem. But it is not certain that the movement will be swept into accommodation with these trends. Whether or not it clarifies its radicalism depends on subjective factors in which libertarians can play a role.

As well, if accommodation does occur it sets up a division with the original base as continuing domination reveals the substantial unsatisfied remainder in original ideas and values (or changes them to account for the fact that the "solution" is now part of the problem).

Of course, there is a difference between a class defined by capitalist structure and women or ecologists. But the nature of modern capitalism diffused such structural definitions. Many new sectors have entered social conflict and apart from the top, all sectors are open to revolutionary consciousness, though some more so than others in particular periods. For libertarians what is significant are crises in meanings, motivations, responsibility, values, beliefs, attitudes and socialization, that is, a cultural crisis. Economic crisis can produce such dislocation but it usually re-inforces fear and individualism. Political crises, war, the struggle of a sector for "first class citizenship", single issues, ecological crisis can all be part of a continuing cultural crisis or act as catalysts for a leap into revolutionary consciousness. Economic struggle or any struggle in the realm of production has

no particular liberatory significance by itself. Questioning of patriarchy, authoritarian education, cultural vacuity and so forth are as vital to the thoroughness of the alternative. Moreover the form of struggle — whether it emphasizes direct action, increases the ability of people to act for themselves, their confidence in their own capacities, their initiative etc. — is of the utmost significance, and we have seen these features in struggle throughout society.

REFORMISM AND REVOLUTION

Capitalism readily accommodates reform and co-opts leaders and organizations, and social democracy and trade unions are an important part of this phenomenon. They attempt to limit demands. Vanguardists attempt to understand which demands capitalism will reject in given circumstances but which will be acceptable to the "consciousness" imputed by them to the "proletariat". The vanguard expects to use a skillful combination of immediate, democratic and transitional demands to lead the workers step by step by the nose to revolution. The manipulation is in pretending to share illusions attributed to the proletariat, which the vanguard "knows" are illusory because capitalism will not grant them. Workers are thus led through "instructive" experience. Usually, of course, the vanguardists underestimate the adaptability of capitalism or the consciousness of the people, or both.

The role of libertarians in relation to demands is to be honest and as accurate as possible. There are no magical demands and the constant leftist focus on demands usually forgets the context. There are no transitional demands. Immediate concerns, especially in a situation of multiple challenge, carry the potential of dispute with the established order as a whole and the possibility of an overall understanding of problems and solutions. A demand which cannot be co-opted will either be abstract and therefore useful only in the propagation of ideas (e.g. "Leave Uranium in the Ground and Bury Capitalism with it"(or symbolic and therefore useful in action (e.g. "Paint 'em black and send them back" — Springbok tour 1971) or it will be instituted by the movement itself and after a certain point this means dual power (e.g. Federation of Workers' Councils). If they are not instituted by the movement itself, they can be integrated into the hierarchical system.

We prefer to participate in movements with demands which challenge the roots of the established order or provide the roots

of the new liberatory order (even if only in ideas), and we encourage such developments. Libertarian groups and individuals will, by intention or by accident of situation, occupation or location be participants in other movements. We will honestly criticize or praise their realism and worthiness according to our perspective.

Reform often strengthens the system, and many reforms do only that. But reforms which qualitatively improve human life, which we value for their own sake, also strengthen the resistance for it is hope that leads to revolution and misery without hope produces nought. The accommodation of reforms often leads to the collapse of movements or their replacement by new institutions of control. But this only destroys movements based on narrowness, and mystification. Libertarians can act to dispel such notions. We want to work in these areas where people are discussing and acting on important issues. We are part of the multiple challenge and we want libertarian socialist ideas to be part of the discussion. We do not rely on self-created action alone.

WORKING WITHIN UNITED FRONTS

We know what is wrong with organizations beyond the real control of people, yet claiming to represent or lead them. But there are also problems with direct action movements and mobilizations. They feature transitory commitment of the participants, uneven sharing of work, lack of confidence amongst participants, changeover of attendance from meeting to meeting, the use of militancy to cover for sterility or lack of direction, and constant pressure (even when aims were originally radical) to modify demands to a meaningless common denominator deriving from the impulse to collect the masses rather than consolidate and develop. It is easy to see how a leadership could grow or established leaderships and infrastructures come to be relied upon. A cause of much of this is the lack of a general appreciation of the problem in hand, a failure to make the link from struggle to struggle and to look at the root causes of social injustices, and an unwillingness to consider the magnitude of necessary change. It is considered more important to make an act of propitiation for guilt, to stop an action, to make a show of opinion or demand a reform. When movements remain this limited, they evaporate, usually without the evaporation of the original injustice. Furthermore their practical value as an experience of self-activity is limited when ad hoc leaderships or bureaucratic control are unquestioned.

When we work in such a situation we consider whether the aims are part of a development toward greater freedom and co-operation. As was indicated our main aim is not to appeal to the oppressors but to demystify the oppressed. But within such a united front we go further and encourage discussion of the issue to deepen the participants' appreciation of the causes of the problem, alternatives available, links with other struggles etc. This could only lessen the vulnerability of the movement to manipulation and increase the confidence and sense of direction of the participants. By advocating democracy we also directly oppose passivity and manipulation. We suggest regular policy and planning meetings to which all who agree with the aims can come. We even suggest that manifestations be turned into such discussions. We also argue for the right of tendency for any group in agreement with the aims.

A COALITION FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY

A further avenue for action for the libertarian group is a coalition with other groups and individuals active in such areas as the women's movement, ecology, radical religion, counter-culture who from their more specific perspective have arrived at libertarian conceptions such as direct democracy. It is important to clarify the meaning of direct democracy with all groups in this coalition before undertaking action. On the basis of such concurrence of aims it is easy to establish a democratic form of co-operation and to avoid some of the perils of the mobilizations discussed above. If a coalition becomes permanent it will create a broad, pluralistic libertarian culture.

However, there are reasons for caution in contracting such alliances. We should ensure that the principles of direct democracy are fundamental to the outlooks of those with whom we join and that these principles are not merely sidelights to a much stronger commitment to such concerns as religious observance, non-violence or protection of the environment.

TRADE UNIONS

We do not aim to reform trade unions any more than we seek to reform social democratic parties. Both are part of the capitalist system. In industry we apply the same range of propagation of ideas and direct intervention as we have discussed in all the points above. Thus we issue our own statements on industrial questions. We might work in a rank and file movement as we would in a united front. We do not spread the illusion that there can be new unions with a different

role to those now operating. We advocate autonomous organization of industrial action.

LIFESTYLES AND ACTIVISM

Health centres, child care collectives, women's centres, free stores, food co-operatives, free schools and education programmes, urban collectives and rural communes are all examples of direct constructive efforts. As the basis of a self-managed community life they have great importance. As concrete instances of the construction of an alternative they are as significant as autonomous bodies for direct action. When they improve the quality of our lives they contribute to our confidence and hope. They provide avenues for politicization of everyday life outside major workplaces.

However, it is in this last point that they are often restricted by ameliorative and self-improvement conceptions of their role. Some advocates place leading a correct style of life against political activism. They see a passive counter-culture as the only genuine path to social change. This disagreement is further exacerbated when small groups of revolutionaries need to devote most of their energies to direct activism in order to keep a libertarian socialist presence. It is clear from our statements on spontaneism that we see the need for intervention and the propagation of ideas. We believe that the maintenance and growth of direct constructive efforts within the community will need political federation foreshadowing the formation of com-munity councils, just as the survival and defence of autonomous bodies in workplaces will require a federation of workers' councils 37

INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

ORGANIZATION

We build organizational structures to facilitate decision-making. Organization is the essential social mechanism, without which social cohesion and co-operation is impossible. Direct democracy is not about structurelessness. No society would be workable if it had to constantly recreate its methods of acting. We are not spontaneists or nihilists; we believe that people must consciously organize their social lives. Similarly revolutionaries require organizations.

The question is to ensure that such organizations are democratic. We reject "democratic centralism" as practised by all marxist-leninist parties. This system assumes the need for hierarchy. Supposedly, authority flows upward from cells etc. to the central committee and discipline flows down. Discipline is the essence of democratic centralism for all decisions of higher party organs are binding on those below. Minorities with divergent opinions are to carry out the will of the majority. They may have the right to work as a faction within the party (though this is considered a concession and is very readily annulled) but they cannot present a divergent opinion publicly on pain of expulsion. When the party holds state power factions risk liquidation.

Elections are held to all party organs and these organs are periodically (no right of recall) accountable to their respective party organizations. Thus the central committee is periodically accountable to the party congress. If this theory is inherently undemocratic, the practise is even worse. For example, the party congress is dispersed and without any authority for most of the time. During this time the central committee is responsible for most of the initiatives which then become binding on the whole party. Such a democratic centralism cannot be viewed separate from its natural product — bureaucratic centralism. Moreover, in association with state power and control over the police and army, any lingering accountability of the higher party organs is soon disposed of through terror.

A few moments thought will show that the basis of democratic centralism is the organizational method of all parties, if not in name, then in reality, except those that are overtly fascist. Conservatives, liberals, social democrats, the Communist Party all maintain hierarchies under the guise of democracy, all maintain discipline under the guise of unity and they all rapidly take on the appearance of bureaucratic centralism. Of course, in parliamentary democracies, most parties allow leeway for dissenting opinions unless they become a threat to existing power

groups. Nor do they take on the methods of totalitariansim when they have state power and use it within their own parties. The party congress or conferences usually have become numbers games in which the leaders competitively organize voting blocs among the delegates to ensure particular positions of power or gain new positions. Similar methods are used to ensure that party policy remains within the limits the leadership deems reasonable.

A libertarian organization can have no part of democratic centralism in its hardline marxist-leninist form or any of its modified or similar forms. We believe that our means must reflect our ends if these ends are to have any chance of realization. Therefore, the basic principles of direct democracy (as described in our *Direct Democracy Not Representative Democracy* statement) apply to the revolutionary organization.

RELEVANT BASIC PRINCIPLES

Majority Rule — the vote of the majority determines policy, decisions on activity and so on. Sensitivity should obviously be applied if the issue is of fundamental importance or if the vote is so close that the group's ability to carry out the decision is affected. However, we reject consensus decision making as a fundamental requirement of democracy. In fact, it can often be intrusive and dictatorial in its subtle demand for compliance and the suppression of genuinely held individual disagreements or reservations. It is far better to have divisions out in the open where they can be discussed. It is better to have a conscious opposition who can watch a decision's coming into effect and criticise or accept its validity accordingly.

One Vote for Each Person — We may encourage some people to develop some of their particular potentials. We may draw heavily on the experience of others. This, however, in no way makes their needs more basic or important than those of any other person. They should be treated accordingly — with respect, as we respect all people, but without submission or privilege. The only privileges that any area of expertise should have are the privileges necessary to that area of knowledge — the privileges necessary to the task of being an engineer, surgeon etc. such as access to certain tools e.g. electron microscopes. Such privilege is obviously qualitatively different from those privileges which flow from giving power to experts.

While we may be ignorant in many areas, we are not mystified by the knowledge of experts. While this absence of

mystification may actually increase our respect for some people's knowledge, it negates completely any possibility of submission. One of our fundamentally revolutionary tasks is to break down the mystification surrounding expertise and the development of knowledge. We must restore people's confidence in their own experiences as the fundamental way of understanding the world. We may place some trust in experts but we cannot surrender control over our lives to them. We, therefore, retain decision making power, expressed in access to information, in involvement in discussion and ultimately, in the vote.

Primacy of the general assembly of the most basic units. Meetings of delegates carry the instructions of these basic units. A movement of revolutionary groups should be organized in a federal structure through the meetings of such delegates such that power actually diminishes at each ascending level of co-ordination. Delegates are revocable.

Involvement in the decision-making process of all people substantially affected by that decision. The corollary of this is that those people not affected should not be involved. There is nothing democratic about the unnecessary involvement of people not implicated in discussions and decisions. We think of these issues in terms of autonomy and responsibility. Individuals have their own ideas and concerns and are capable of determining their own priorities and making their own decisions. In this they are autonomous. This autonomy and independence is to be encouraged and promoted. The counter to the abuse of this autonomy is the concept of responsibility, an awareness of the limits of autonomy. Those people who are *responsible* for any particular thing are those people whose activity it concerns in an immediate sense. This means they have decision making rights in that area. Any person or group of people who have a clearly defined area of responsibility can be said to be autonomous in that area. Any person or group of people who make decisions outside their sphere of responsibility without involving all those people who are responsible can be said to have act *unilaterally.* Responsibility is an important aspect of the social ethic not to be regarded lightly.

The Full Circulation of All Relevant Information. We should not set up structures and practices which obstruct people from obtaining information. We should set up mechanisms for making information readily available.

Minority Rights. Any minority on a given question has full freedom to express its ideas in public and to have access to all means for the expression of these ideas. It has the right to speak

on the same platform as the majority, to outline its position, to publish its view along with the majority view or to release it in a separate statement if it prefers.

A minority is not obliged to take part in activities flowing from a decision or policy with which it disagrees.

In a libertarian group in which these rights are, in fact, a reality there is no justification for secrecy or other forms of manipulation on either side of a disagreement.

We have talked of rights here. Rights are an expression of the social ethic. They are the codification of what we expect of each other. They define limits we set on our behaviour so that we preserve the integrity of others and do not trample on their needs. Thus, they are a guarantee (of ourselves) and an expression of confidence (in others). They are the social code which makes co-operation possible and comprehensible. But rights without the power to exercise them are mere rhetoric. In the points above we have stated the essential elements that provide the power to make rights a reality. But even these decision making structures are no guarantee of democracy unless people remain active rather than passive in their involvement. We believe they can be and should be written down as a code to guide a direct democracy. But the reality of the operation of democracy will also be affected by many factors less obvious than direct violation of basic principles. The elaboration of a few points illustrates some of these factors.

POWER AND INFLUENCE

Power can be understood in several senses. It can denote the ability to perform certain tasks i.e. power over the material world. However, in the social sense, we recognize that power is an aspect of decision making. Decision making is the essence of organization. While all people make decisions of some kind, we recognize that in the present society some people make decisions on other people's behalf and occupy positions of power while other people's role becomes passive. They carry out decisions that others have made. There is no precise division, rather the division is a hierarchically graded one of people having different degrees of power and powerlessness.

Our decision making power should be equal. In coming to a decision we may be influenced in various ways. If someone has particular expertise in a sphere, rationally, we are bound to be influenced by that expertise in one way or another. Finally, however, we must make our own critical judgement. While it should not necessarily concern us that some people are more influential in some areas or even in general than others, we must

recognize the variety and complexity of human nature and be sensitive to the potential and depth of people who do not fit society's definition of "strong" or "dominant" personalities.

The dividing line between influence and power can be quite subtle. Power cannot be applied unless people abdicate their critical responsibility. There will be many decisions made which only a handful of people will influence and this is not necessarily a bad thing. However, the moment people passively accept another viewpoint then problems of power confront us. We need not assume simply because we espouse revolutionary principles that we will not fall into this way of acting. Moreover, the blame cannot always be placed on those who have "influenced" us. It is our responsibility not to be influenced other than in a rational manner. We cannot criticise one who was merely arguing a viewpoint when it is we who are incapable of being critically independent. If we are unsure, or unconvinced, or confused, we should not be afraid to say so. However, those who are experienced, knowledgeable or articulate should appreciate the difficulties inherent in the situation where there are significant differences in these areas across the organization. Such people should be sensitive in their use of language and of argument realizing that these may be means of exercising power over others who are less confident. Such an exercise of power is unacceptable in a libertarian socialist organization.

WOMEN AND MEN

Males should be aware of the destructive effects of sexism on their relationships with female members of the organization and should make every effort to eliminate sexism from their behaviour and language. Women members should point our such incidents to the men concerned realizing that these men are probably amenable to change.

The women comrades must help themselves and each other actively to take up more equal roles in some areas where sex-role conditioning or the results of confidence-destroying pressures that continue to be part of the woman's situation are draining their energies. Since the basis of revolutionary relationships is mutual co-operation and support, revolutionary women's commitment to each other must replace the veiled rivalry and distrust which so often invades women's relationships and prevents them from taking themselves seriously as a revolutionary force.

OBLIGATIONS

We dispute the idea that freedom is individual freedom from obligations to a democratic social organization. Freedom suggests rights. Among these are the rights of others to have expectations of an individual member. This is not an infringement of freedom. The acceptance by other people of their duties is the other side of the reality of our rights.

A related matter here is the organization of work. The acceptance of tasks is an individual act based on the individual's assessment of his or her energy. Acceptance of that task makes that task an obligation.

SOME DETAILS ON THE ORGANIZATION'S INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

UNITY AND MEMBERSHIP

Some libertarians confuse the achievement of democracy with the existence of an informal, freely fluctuating and entirely open association. They identify a lack of democracy with any arrangements placing limits on the constituency for decision-making. The nub of direct democracy is that everyone who should be involved *is* involved, not that, in principle, everyone should be involved. Of course there will always be important disputes about who should be involved, but without selectivity democracy would be unworkable. Despite what some libertarians think there is no demand in principle that a libertarian group must be totally open.

A general assembly of a workers' or community council has no need to require agreement in ideas from its members or to pre-empt disagreement on any questions it may need to discuss. To attempt to do so would be a departure from democratic principle. A fascist who disagrees with the direct democratic system has a vote in that system. But such councils are not primarily concerned with the function of representing and disseminating ideas. A revolutionary organization is and that, along with its embattled position in society, constitutes the prominent features of its exceptional position. (It would be absurd to give a fascist a vote in such a group!)

The libertarian revolutionary organization should not exert discipline, set up order-givers, practice democratic centralism, have "junior" members or use any other authoritarian mechanism to create cohesion. The only basis for its cohesion is in a degree of unity in its basic ideas. It is advantageous to adhere to a basic level of unity on ideas and to ask agreement at this level from potential members. At the very least this avoids repetitively

reaching a level of agreement already long established.

However, we all approach libertarian socialism from different experiences, therefore our approaches will differ. To go to the other extreme and demand too much internal unity in ideas leads to just as much unproductive internal tussling in the effort to ensure overall uniformity. It also makes too much of the exceptional position of the revolutionary group already mentioned and puts it in the same category as the various religious proselytizers, the doctrinaire left sects and other fanatical groups.

We believe that the level of agreement required should be limited. It should not extend, in the region of social theory for example, too far beyond the basic socialist/feminist/anarchist critiques at a general level. A most fundamental right is the right of free-thinking, the right and authority of free judgement to explain and interpret all things for oneself. Our unity extends as far as we agree on the basic solution to human relations: a self-management revolution and how we can best contribute to it. There is a variety of opinion on other aspects of human relations, and what we regard as most fulfilling.

Therefore people interested in joining us should work with some section of the group or join in some general activity of the group depending on their interests and skills. They should reach a practical appreciation of the way the group works and they should gain a general idea of what the group has been saying and discover their agreements and disagreements. The members they work with would also be learning about them. They should read *As We See It, The Role of the Revolutionary Organization, Direct Democracy Not Representative Democracy* and *Internal Democracy* and understand that substantial agreement on these matters is sought.

The questions discussed in these four statements are most germane to the consistency of means and ends that we require and it is our experience that substantial disagreement in these areas is difficult to contain within a single revolutionary organization. The issues raised from this reading should be discussed. When the new member is proposed in a general meeting, those who have been involved should offer recommendations and a vote should be taken. If accepted a person becomes a member with all the rights we mutually defend and the responsibilities we mutually share.

We have outlined the level of unity in the group. Continued divergence over basic principles either expressed in action, public statements or internal behaviour will produce confront-

ations and, if not resolution, then possibly dropping out expulsions, splits or even dissolution.

TENSIONS

It should be recognized that there are unusual aspects to the position of a revolutionary and that of a revolutionary group.

Obvious difficulties include - sharp disagreement, constant conflict (often acute, even violent) with the social surroundings and with slim resources to bear the pressure of such antagonism; combinations of people demanding constant, often intense contact, mutual dependence etc. perhaps without the space normally available for a release from such contact; risk of an excessive personal identification with secondary social aspects of the group; the attraction of romantic and other types. It should be observed that similar difficulties occur for some other form of opposition (whether revolutionary or "alternative") such as communes or collectives.

Thus there will be a range of incompatibility, personality clashes etc., such as will always exist in human organisations, and when groups are small or isolated (or both) such conflicts may be exacerbated. Such matters should be understood so that people are not too willing to disguise such conflicts as matters of high principle.

There are two contradictory fallacies in dealing with a situation if such conflicts move from irritation to disruption.

"Everything will be resolved as long as we keep fulfilling our tasks," This might be called the Victorian pragmatist view and against it we have to put our view that revolutionary activity aims to increase peoples' self confidence. If we cannot build our self confidence collectivly, and spare some thoughts on how to do this, then the revolutionary movement is in for some demoralizations.

Our total unity is essential. If we resolve our own problems, then everything is simple. Therefore much of our energy should concern internal problems. This might be called group narcissism. Against it we must realize that no amount of discussion will resolve all the tensions that arise in a revolutionary group. At various times people will take their frustrations out on each other. We expect these problems to be resolved in a humanist way, and we expect a high level of comradeship in a self-management organization, but if we thought group therapy could solve all our problems, we wouldn't be revolutionaries.

The balance lies between the two poles of these viewpoints.

These conflicts may be combined with genuine differences of a substantive kind. It is possible that conflicts of this kind, if unresolved, will lead to dropping out, expulsions, splits or even dissolution.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

The revolutionary organization is not an embryo of the future society. Its structure will not attempt to rigidly mirror the general structure of future society but will be a response to particular circumstances. It will not necessarily have the stability of the structure of the organs of a self-managed society.

If it is a growing organization, it may be that a general gathering which is its democratic centre will be gradually superceded by the increasing dynamism, profusion or size of sections defined by such things as particular activities, occupations, insitutional locations or personal orientations. Such sections may be affinity groups, collectives, cells in various workplaces or other institutions, community groups, urban or rural communes etc. Then the general gathering would become a meeting of revocable delegates with a mandate to vote according to the views of their particular sections.

There are other possibilities. In difficult times there may be a return to the earlier closer structure or a group may remain unitary rather than federal and express its expansiveness in coalitions with other groups in the form of a movement.

At all times our primary concern will be that, whatever the specific structure, we practise the broad principles of internal democracy discussed here.

CONCLUSION

We have dealt only with internal democracy here. Thus, we have not concerned ourselves with the other avenues of expansiveness and more open association available in the relationship of the group with various constructive efforts such as co-operatives, councils and rank and file groups which do, at least in their potential, represent the embryonic form of the self-managed society, or with our relationship with other groups of libertarian revolutionaries. [*See The Role of the Libertarian Revolutionary Organization.*]

We hope that we have provided a clear understanding of the rights, responsibilities and mode of operation of the internal democracy which, along with the various external forms of democratic coalition with others, constitute the most immediate test of the reality of our ideas.

AS WE SEE IT

(1) Throughout the world societies are characterised by a division beteen those without power and a hierarchy of decision-makers. People take no part in the decisions which most deeply and directly affect their lives. All work and knowledge is disassociated from power to determine major social priorities and activities. On serious matters people surrender responsibilities to hierarchies. People never feel the power of co-operative control over their work and therefore lack confidence in their own ability. They believe in leadership even when the leaders repeatedly use the repressive machinery of the state to reinforce their privileged position.

(2) During the past century the living standards of working people improved. But neither these improved living standards, nor the nationalisation of the means of production, nor the coming to power of parties claiming to represent the working class, such as marxist-leninist or social democratic parties, have basically altered the status of the worker as worker. Nor have they given the bulk of mankind much freedom outside production. East and West, capitalism remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority are bossed at work, and manipulated in consumption and leisure. Progaganda and police, prisons and schools, traditional values and traditional morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and convince or coerce the many into acceptance of a brutal, degrading and irrational system. The "Communist" world is not communist and the "Free" world is not free!

(3) The trade unions and the traditional parties declared they would change all this. But they have come to terms with the existing patterns of exploitation. In fact they are now essential if exploitative society is to continue working smoothly. The unions act as middlemen in the labour market. The political parties use the struggles and aspirations of workers for their own ends. The degeneration of the working class organisations, itself the result of the failure of the revolutionary movement, has been a major factor in creating working class apathy, which in turn led to the further degeneration of both parties and unions.

(4) The trade unions and political parties cannot be reformed "captured," or converted into instruments of working class emancipation. We don't call however for the proclamation of new unions, which in the condition of today would suffer a similar fate to the old ones. Nor do we cal for militants to tear up

their union cards, if you are forced to have one by the union bureaucrats who control the job. Our aims are simply that the workers themselves should decide on the objectives of their struggles and that the control and organisation of these struggles should remain firmly in their own hands. The forms which the self-activities of the working class may take will vary considerably from country and from industry to industry. Its basic content will not.

(5) Socialism is not just the common ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. It means equality, real freedom, reciprocal recognition and a radical transformation in all human relations. It is people's positive self-consciousness. It is people's understanding of their environment and of themselves, their control over their work and over such social institutions as they may need to create. These are not secondary aspects, which will automatically follow the expropriation of the old ruling class. On the contrary they are essential parts of the whole process of social transformation, for without them no general social transformation will take place.

(6) A socialist society therefore can only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by the workers and community councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. This democratisation of society at its very roots is what we mean by "workers power".

(7) "Meaningfull action," for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the egalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of people and whatever assists in their demystification. "Sterile and harmful action" is whatever reinforces the passivity of the people, the apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others — even those allegedly acting on their behalf.

(8) No ruling class in history has ever relinguished its power without a struggle and our present rulers are unlikely to be an exception. Power will only be taken from them through the conscious, autonomous action of the vast majority of people

themselves. Those soldiers and police who are workers because they are given orders and paid low wages, will find themselves in a particularly difficult situation when called upon by the bosses to suppress their fellow workers. We encourage soldiers and police who believe in our ideas to prepare resistance inside the police force and the armed forces. In a self-managed society those hierarchical organisations will dissolve and defence and social justice will be maintained by the workers and community councils. The building of socialism will require mass understanding and mass participation. We have confidence in the strength and efficiency of ppeople. This is our political strength. The boss and his executive are pathetic in relation to this combined human effort. More pitiful are the bolsheviks and social democrats who try to represent workers and who think they are strong because they ape the bosses' political and economic organisation with central executives, leaders and the whole hierarchical system.

(9) We do not accept the view that workers are only interested in material rewards. On the contrary, we believe that our conditions of life and our experience in production constantly drive us to adopt priorities and values and to find methods of organisation which challenge the established order and established pattern of thought. These responses are implicitely socialist. On the other hand, workers are fragmented, dispossessed of the means of communication and the various sections are at different levels of awareness and consciousness. It is necessary that explicitely socialist ideas are fought for before people will break out of their atomisation and hopelessness and face the task of organising their struggle autonomously and equally. This is the role of the revolutionary organisation. It is done by carrying out meaningful action which generalises the idea of self-management, supporting such action of others, and opposing useless action. The revolutionary organisation cannot abdicate criticism of sterile and harmful working class struggle, nor can it support the ruling classes of state capitalism in Russia and China or their embryos as represented in the national liberation fronts in the third world and in the marxist-leninist parties of the industrialised countries.

(10) The *Libertarian Socialist Organisation* is an organised group of people who are unified around the essential demand for workers and community councils as the basis of real democracy. In these councils people will have equal decision-making and be

paid an equal wage. We do not see ourselves as yet another leadership, but merely people in socialist struggle where we live and work. We do not reflect values of leadership internally. Our structure is based on equal decision-making and autonomy. As an individual member or as a minority, different political opinions on the best way to achieve these aims are able to be held and publicly articulated as the position of a minority as opposed to the majority. The function of this statement is to help all those who are in conflict with the present authoritarian social structure, both in industry and in society at large, to generalise their experience, to make a total critique of their conditions and its causes, not just ones of their particular situation, and to build autonomous organisations which will develop the people's revolutionary consciousness which is necessary if society is to be totally transformed. We encourage you to join an organised struggle for these aims because isolated individual acts, no matter how courageous or full of integrity, are easily defeated by ruling class oppression.

THE ANARCHIST CASE AGAINST TERRORISM • THE ANARCHIST

YOU CAN'T BLOW UP A SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

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AGAINST TERRORISM •THE ANAR
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Politics of Human Liberation

Many principled people see the absurdity of having to make a choice between the privilege and injustice of the so-called "Free World" and the slavery and brutality of the so-called Communist world. What has prevented many from accepting the necessity for identifying with the revolutionary alternative of libertarian socialism is the feeling that it is impractical. The vision of a decentralized, self-managed society where people controlled their own lives and shared equally in the social wealth was attractive but chimerical.

Nevertheless, there is a vital libertarian socialist revolutionary tradition which goes back nearly two centuries, and is manifested continually in modern revolutionary movements and the libertarian impulse in human affairs is undeniably strong. It remains for libertarian socialists to convince people of the viability of a self-managed society based on the principle of direct-democracy and to construct a role for themselves which would allow them to create a dynamic presence for libertarian ideas without adopting the authoritarian practices which characterize social democratic and communist parties.

It is hoped that this book is a positive contribution to the continuing process of debate, organization and action by the libertarian movement in Australia and to the spreading of libertarian socialist ideas throughout the community.

"(By a self-managed society) we mean a society which presupposes the abolition of the state, the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, the distribution of society's wealth on the basis of equality, the displacement of the consumer society by social relationships firmly grounded in a richer cultural and community life and the re-organization of work according to criteria of health, interest, co-operation and social need. It also involves the replacement of social hierarchies by decision-making which has its institutional basis in general assemblies of men and women at fundamental levels — the workplace and the community. As revolutionaries we can conceive of only one goal for a social revolution — the remaking of society so that human beings will be an end in themselves and human life a revered, and even a marvellous experience."

"As long as we have competing nation states we will have the threat of war, which means nuclear, chemical and biological war. Those who look to the state as the agency of social change forget that the state is the bloodiest perpetrator of violence that humanity has created."

"Vanguardists believe that they can implement a socialist society by seizing the state. We, on the other hand, believe that a democratic society can only be created by a mass movement which itself constructs the organization means to replace the state entirely."

"We claim to see a little further than others but we do not aspire to be leaders in consequence of this."

LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST ORGANISATION